gives some particulars of it in his excellent "History of Surrey." The drawing-room was painted by Barrett, the academician, and Cipriani. We hope it continues in a sufficiently good state to be preserved.

Having got amongst the painters, we cannot avoid noting the last occurrences in respect of Mr. Vernon's present to the nation, and some few remarks on the return which has *not* been made to him. On Sir Robert Harry Inglis expressing a hope two or three evenings ago that the House would mark its sense of the munificence of Mr. Vernon, in making so large a contribution to the National Gallery as he had done, Lord Morpeth said that the *Committee had already intimated to Mr. Vernon the gratitude of the nation for his unprecedented generosity.*

If Mr. Vernon has received all the intimation of the gratitude of the nation which is intended, it is indeed small enough, and is calculated most seriously to discourage any who might be willing to follow a noble example. We mentioned a few weeks ago, with some shame, that a *knighthood* had been offered to Mr. Vernon, and of course declined. A contemporary, in alluding to our statement, expressed a hope (and well he might) that we had been misinformed. We can inform him, however, positively, that our statement was correct. The *honour* was offered by Lord John Russell as emanating from her Majesty, which made the refusal of it a matter of delicacy. Still no friend of Mr. Vernon entertained for one moment the idea of his receiving it,—as the lowest honour the Queen can bestow, and one which is given on very trifling occasions for no service at all, it was felt, and justly, that the offer of it did not shew a proper appreciation of the gift; it was therefore respectfully declined, and of this reply *no notice whatever has been taken.* Every one concluded that a baronetcy would have been offered, and this Mr. Vernon would doubtless have accepted. The whole affair serves to shew the estimation in which the fine arts are held, and would even lead to the belief that ministers think it necessary to discourage others from following the example, as further donations would be troublesome! The public, however, view the matter differently. Notwithstanding the want of due acknowledgment on the part of the Government, Mr. Vernon's good will appears to be unabated, for within these last three days we understand a letter has been received by Mr. Uwins from Mr. Pettigrew, offering to the National Gallery, on the part of Mr. Vernon, another picture, viz., the Council of Horses, by the veteran academician Ward, remarkable as having been painted at the advanced period of life to which the artist has attained.

As to the disposition of the pictures, we can now state positively that, notwithstanding all the pros. and cons., the pictures *will* be removed in the course of this month, to rooms in the National Gallery, where they will be kept entire as the "Vernon Gallery," until some further arrangement can be made.

The value of the arts is not properly understood by some of those in power, and men who are aiding their advancement, labouring zealously to lead the masses to the refining enjoyments afforded by the arts, do not receive sufficient consideration. We have another instance of this in the course taken by the Board of Trade in respect of the Art-Union of London,—a course which, if persisted in, could not fail to destroy this important institution altogether. Compelled by the force of the representations made to them to withdraw unconditionally their first proposed alterations, the Board have now, as we stated a short time ago, suggested a course diametrically opposite. The preamble of their first letter was "with the view of restricting the field of selection;" the preamble of their second letter is "with the view of *enlarging* the field of selection:"—so much for consistency. A deputation of the council of the association* attended Lord Granville at Whitehall, on Tuesday, and pointed out the grave objections that there are to removing the present regulations, the result of long experience, which limit the choice of the prize-holders to the works of art in the public exhibitions of the year. Under the present arrangement the knowledge that a certain number of pictures must be purchased from the galleries, serves as a stimulus to artists, which as altered, would of course no longer exist,—while the opportunities for collusion and improper arrangement would be so greatly increased as to lead to serious irregularities. At the conclusion of the interview, the deputation stated that the majority of the council, sooner than be subjected again to the same amount of uncalled for and unnecessary annoyance which the interference of the Board of Trade had caused them, were prepared to resign their office.

We hope the Board will immediately withdraw the proposition: and with the expression of this hope we terminate our gossip.

ON THE INFLUENCES WHICH TEND TO RETARD THE PROGRESS OF THE FINE ARTS.

The object of this paper is to shew that the condition of the fine arts does not depend so much upon the artist as the state of public taste, and to expose some of the injurious influences to which they are subjected in England on this account; also, to shew that the characteristic features they exhibit will be the faithful exponents of that taste.

It may appear to some that too wide digressions are made from the subject in the following paper; but we feel the condition of art to be so intimately bound up with, and dependent on, our social condition, that it is feared unless it be investigated, the real motives which rule the former will be hidden from our view.

We consider that the circumstances which regulate the production of the fine arts are precisely similar to those of any branch of the manufactures,—that unless the supply tendered fulfil the terms of the demand, it will be profitless to the producer. We feel assured, too, that, like all manufactured productions, a constant, extensive, and discriminating demand will urge the producer to advance steadily towards excellence, and will find him, if not slightly in advance of public taste, generally keeping pace with, and very seldom below it. It is our firm conviction that any demand made upon the arts by the public will be responded to, and that the quality demanded will be the quality supplied, if it be not too sudden and unexpected.

It will, perhaps, exhibit our notion of the relation in which the arts stand to public taste more completely, if society be compared to a book, and the fine arts to the illustrations; for in contemplating attentively the vestiges of the Grecian and Roman periods—of the mediæval—the Dutch and Flemish schools—and, more recently, the battle pieces of Versailles, or the modern German works,—who can help feeling that one and all have been moulded to illustrate the feeling as well as to answer the demands of public taste? We think that there are few who could contend that Phidias created the appreciation of the beautiful among the Greeks; that the Greek artists employed by, established the taste for, the ostentatious display of the Romans; that Fra Angelica, Raffaelle, and others, originated the absorbing faith of their age; that Reubens, Teniers, and Vandervelde, originated the vulgar tastes, or the circumstances they painted; that Horace Vernet created the thirst for military display in the French, or that Cornelius or Kaulbach developed the "fantasie" of the Germans. The conclusion becomes irresistible in favour of the arts of all periods being impressed with the characteristics of the people among whom they have flourished; they are the monuments which are erected over the past, on which are written, in symbols not to be mistaken, the rank and achievements of the departed.

Reproaches have been too often, we conceive, heaped upon the artists themselves, which were really due to the low condition of public taste, over which they possess but slight, if any control, but who are on the contrary, the controlled and passive instruments, who must respond to its call if they wish to subsist. They must feed the Hydra with food which is palatable, if they do not wish to perish within the bounds of its tyrannical sway. If its tastes are limited to "*genre*"—if it prefer that which furnishes slight matter for contemplation to the higher styles of art, it is in vain that the artist attempts higher class subjects—there may be a few who are capable of appreciating such, but their numbers are not sufficient to give the direction and tone to the profession which would distinguish the English school as one of high aim—and we are speaking of its aspect in the aggregate, and not of the exceptions. The demand even for that quality of art which it chiefly patronizes is inconsiderable and precarious, how much more so then must it be for that style to which it shews no particular regard, the histories of those who have relied upon it will sufficiently attest; and how many have aspired to the highest walks who have been compelled by the strong arm of necessity to the less precarious "*genre*," or to that which is least so, viz, portraiture. The lash which is applied so unmercifully by the discriminating few, becomes the more galling as the artist feels the utter impossibility of escaping it, but by desertion; high art will neither feed nor clothe him, and excellence is not achieved in a day: how then is he to be supported during his probation? every now and then his aspiring hopes are revived, and he thinks a movement is taking place in its favour, but it is only a faint flickering which again subsides, and thus longing in the tedious night for the earnest dawn of day, he falls into the last sleep of death—unpitied and unknown.

Let it not be imagined that we undervalue any class of the fine arts,—they all respond to the varied nature of public taste; but when a nation such as great Britain is found incapable of supporting one or two historical painters, it certainly betrays a poverty either of education or purse, and certainly it cannot be the latter.

If the condition of the arts be regulated by the demand on production, we must examine those circumstances which influence the extent and nature of it, in order to expose the real sources of most of the drawbacks under which they labour. Our enquiries will centre chiefly on the following: Does the demand on production in the arts emanate from those who are termed educated, or from those who are stigmatised as uneducated? Do these conditions affect them? If the demand originates from those called educated, why is it that after taking into consideration the large masses of the uneducated, it still appears so limited in proportion to what it is conceived it might be under other circumstances? and lastly, what are the injurious influences operating within the profession itself?

We will, in the first place, endeavour to ascertain whether that class of the community has any influence in retarding progress, which is stigmatised as the lowest—the lowest because it is uneducated, and therefore unable to appreciate a better state of existence: the means of education are not within its power, it is then a condition of necessity, rather than of choice; and if so, the stigma is unmerited and misplaced.

We are happy to find, however, that the State is awakening to a sense of its duty towards this victim of neglect; the political expediency, too, of educating this class becomes every day more evident and more compelling, for there is an education of evil influences as well as of good—both are at the

* Mr. Auldjo, Mr. Britton, Lord Compton, Mr. Donaldson, Mr. Gaskoin, Mr. George Godwin, Mr. Morris, Mr. Lewis Pocock, and Mr. Zouch Troughton.

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